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EXAMINATION

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Dr. Hutchinson's Sermon

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Preach'd in the

Cathedral Church of St. Paul,

February 15 1727,

BEFORE THE

SONS of the CLERGY.

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Printed: And Sold by J. Roberts in *Warwick-
Lane.* M DCC XXVIII.

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E X A M I N A T I O N
O F

Dr. *Hutchinson's* Sermon.

AN honest Man, and one who professes himself to be a Lover of Truth, if he has Leisure enough, should suffer nothing to pass from the Press thro' the Hands of his Fellow-Citizens, without enquiring into the Tendency of it; and, if there be any thing false or noxious in it, to brand and expose it in such a manner, as to prevent Mankind from being deceiv'd and hurt by the Doctrine advanced therein: Especially when the thing publish'd is so considerable, either from the Subject, or the Character of the Person who treats of it, as to engage the Perusal of great Numbers of honest well-meaning People.

This is my Apology for examining the Sermon preach'd (and since publish'd) by

B

Dr.

Dr. *Hutchinson*, at the last Anniversary Meeting of the Sons of the Clergy; in which he appears to me to have asserted and recommended, as a very important Christian Duty, something foreign to the Purpose of that Day, and which is without any Foundation either in Reason or Scripture; as every Reader must be convinced who looks into his Discourse with any other than a cursory and implicit Eye.

And, in the first Place, who can help observing, that the Text chosen by the Doctor is as odd and improper for a Charity Sermon, as could have been pick'd out of the two Testaments. The Design of this Meeting being manifestly nothing more than to make a Collection of Money for the Relief of such Widows and Orphans of the Clergy as are proper Objects of Charity; one would think the chief Aim of the Preacher, upon that Occasion, should be to put his Audience in mind, that Compassion to the Poor is a necessary and indispensable Part of Religion, highly reasonable in itself, and frequently injoyn'd in the Word of God. But the Text is an Instance and an Argument to shew that we are not so bound to prosecute this Duty, as to neglect every thing else for the Pursuit of it; and mentions Charity to the Poor

as a thing which we *may* do, rather than enjoins it as what we *ought* to do. When *Mary* was censur'd for pouring the precious Oyl on our Lord's Head, he re-proves those that censur'd her, in the Words chosen by the Doctor for his Text, *And Jesus said, let her alone, why trouble you her? She hath wrought a good Work on me. For ye have the Poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good; but me ye have not always.* This therefore being an Instance, that the Relief of the Poor may, at some times, be omitted or postpon'd, must be a very improper Text for that Season, wherein the present and immediate Practice of it was the End for which the Doctor's Congregation were assembled.

But, however improper these Words appear to be for a Charity Sermon, the Doctor takes occasion to extract from them something which he would fain substitute instead thereof, by telling his Audience, *Page 6.* "That God expects
 " it from them, as their Duty, that, up-
 " on all proper Occasions, they should
 " make Freewill Offerings to him of their
 " Substance." By which, at first Sight, one would think no more was meant than that People should be liberal to the Poor; for by what other way can we

make Freewill Offerings to God of our Substance? But the Doctor takes care to distinguish, and thereby to infer that there is some other way, by adding in the Words immediately following the other, "and also be ready, at all times, to relieve the Necessities of all such as are the real Objects of our Compassion." And accordingly he all along makes these to be two distinct Duties; calls one Acts of *Piety*, the other Acts of *Charity*; makes one to consist in giving much of our Substance for the Service of God, the other in being compassionate and liberal to the Poor; says, *those we ought to do, and not to leave the other undone*; with more to the same Purpose. By which he plainly means two distinct things; but how to distinguish between them in any Sense agreeable to the Tenor of the Gospel, I defy the Doctor to shew. I aver there is no other way of serving God with our Substance, but that of relieving the Indigent. Our Lord affirms it, by telling the modest *Righteous*, when they disown'd or were ignorant of their having serv'd him with their Substance, *Inasmuch as they had done it to the least of his Brethren* (meaning any poor distressed Christians) *they had done it to him*. Those ridiculous *Deodands*, so much applauded and preach'd

preach'd up by the *Popish* Clergy, such
 as building sumptuous Chapels to say
 Masses in for the Dead, giving large Re-
 venues to those idle Societies of Men
 and Women, call'd Religious Houses,
 and offering rich Oblations of Jewels, and
 Gold, and Silver, to adorn Shrines, have
 not the least Warrant in Scripture. Whe-
 ther the Doctor, by urging the Duty of
honouring God with our Substance as a dis-
 tinct thing from *relieving the Necessities*
of the Poor, means any thing like this, I
 will not pretend to determine; Yet so
 great a Stress does he lay upon this ima-
 ginary Duty, as to make it equal, and
 sometimes superior to the other real and
 substantial one; and affirms that a Man
 “ may as soon persuade himself that he is
 “ under no Obligations to honour his
 “ Father, or to abstain from Murder, as
 “ that he is not tied to honour the Lord
 “ with his Substance;” to which he adds,
 with his usual Disjunctive, “ nor to re-
 “ lieve the crying Necessities of the Poor.
 The Doctor says, “ No express Rule or
 “ Law can be given whereby to ascertain
 “ what Persons are to give on every *pi-*
 “ *ous* and *charitable* Occasion;” yet he
 “ thinks our Saviour has fully determin'd
 “ the Matter, in the Approbation he
 “ gave of the poor Widow's casting in
 “ two Mites, which was all her Living,
 “ into

“ into the Sacred Treasury.” And from thence he infers, *Pag. 7.* “ that the greater and more extensive any of our Charities are, the more acceptable they shall be in the Sight of God, and the greater shall our Reward be at the last Day.” Now the Instance he takes from Scripture, and the Inference he draws from it, are alike false. The Story of this Widow is related by St. *Mark* and St. *Luke*; and is, almost *verbatim*, the same in both. Our Lord observes, that by *casting in two Mites*, even all her Substance, she *cast in more* (in proportion) than the *rich Men* who *cast in much*; which was what his Disciples were ignorant of, who might probably be admiring the Liberality of those only who *cast in much*. As for our Lord’s *Approbation*, of what either the *Widow* or the *rich Men* did, the Evangelists are wholly silent in that Point. Nor is it likely that our Lord, however he might tacitly approve the Intention of these Donors, should openly commend them for their Benefactions towards a Temple, the Worship of which he came to abolish; and of which he says (as some spake of it, how it was adorn’d with goodly Stones and Gifts) *As for these things which ye behold, the Days will come in the which there shall not be left one Stone upon another, that shall*

shall not be thrown down, Luke xxi. 15.
 We see therefore the Doctor was mistaken in his Instance, and it will appear that he is as wrong in his Inference: For it is certain that when Donations, of even real Charity, are *greater* than the Circumstances of the Donor can justly allow of, those that give them are far from doing what is *acceptable in the Sight of God*; they are robbing those of their Household, and thereby become worse than Infidels. And since it does not appear that our Lord *approv'd* of what the *poor Widow* did (notwithstanding the Doctor affirms he did) I think all reasonable Christians must disapprove of it, and conclude that however well she might mean, she acted superstitiously, and judg'd very ill, in giving all she had to live upon, to be imbezelled and abus'd by a Parcel of wicked Fellows, who (as our Lord himself tells us) in respect to *the Kingdom of God*, were inferior to even *Publicans and Harlots*, Matth. xxi. 31.

The Doctor having divided and rang'd his Discourse under three Heads, I shall examine each of them in order as they follow. First, he undertakes to *shew*, p. 8. " that
 " to make Freewill Offerings to God of
 " our Substance, is a good Work, and a
 " Duty incumbent on us, both from the
 " Law of Nature, the express Commands
 " of

" of God in Scripture, and the Example
 " of all good Men ". This he means in a
 distinct Sense from extending Relief to
 the Poor ; and thus he endeavours to *shew*
 it. " That this is a Branch of the Law of
 " Nature, says the Doctor, seems evident
 " from hence ; because it has been the
 " universal Practice of all Ages and Na-
 " tions, as well Barbarous as Civiliz'd."
 But the Doctor forgets that by the same
 Rule Idolatry may be prov'd to be a
 Branch of the Law of Nature likewise.
 For, as there never was any Nation which
 has not, at some time or other, been
 given to Idolatry ; so, in all Places, where
 Idolatry has obtain'd, it has been the con-
 stant Practice for the Priests to make the
 People believe that the pretended Deities
 they worship'd would be best pleas'd
 with the richest Offerings. But there is
 something which appears to me so per-
 plex'd and confus'd in the Doctor's Rea-
 soning as he concludes this Head, that I
 cannot forbear transcribing it for the En-
 tertainment of the Reader. " Now a
 " Practice so universal as this (says he,
 " *p. 10.*) obtaining, not only among all
 " wiser Nations, but even throughout all
 " the World, cannot be deriv'd from
 " *any other* Principle than the Law of
 " Nature ; it must be propagated to Man-
 " kind, *either* from a Tradition deriv'd
 " from

“ from our first Parents, or from the
 “ Light of Reason suggesting it to all
 “ Mankind: For whatever is univer-
 “ sal must be natural, not being founded
 “ upon Compact, or the particular Hu-
 “ mours of Men, but flowing from the
 “ native Results of Reason: It must come
 “ from the Law of Nature, or, what a-
 “ mounts to the same, from the God of
 “ Nature, from a Command which God
 “ has written upon the Minds of all
 “ Men; for, as *Xenophon* observes, that
 “ which is universally observ’d by all Nati-
 “ ons, must be the Dictate of God himself.
 But the Doctor is mistaken in what he
 would be at; for the Universality of the
 Practice of any thing, is no Proof of its
 being the Result of natural Reason. And,
 notwithstanding the general Prevalence
 both of Idolatry and Offerings, there
 were always some Exceptions of the wi-
 ser sort of Men, who knew God could
 never be pleas’d with such a gross Wor-
 ship: witness the principal Philosophers
 of several Ages and Nations. If we were
 to infer from the Practices of Mankind
 what the Law of Nature is, then Idolatry
 may be infer’d to be so. But if the Law
 of Nature is to be deduced and learn’d
 from the true Use and Light of our own
 natural Reason only, neither Idolatry, nor
 Offering our Substance to God, in the Do-

ctor's Sense, can ever be thought rational, nor consequently acceptable to the Deity.

The Doctor proceeds next to prove more fully that this is a Duty, by pretending to "*shew* that it is expressly enjoin'd in "*Scripture*." And he begins with telling us that "*the Jews* were requir'd to "*make Freewill Offerings to God*; and "*that 'twas God's express Command to "*the Israelites*, that they should never "*appear before him empty*; with more to that purpose. But are we *Christians* to be governed by the typical Ceremonies appointed for the *Jews*? Is there not an End of all those carnal Offerings to God, since *Jesus Christ* has offer'd himself for us, once for all? Sure those *Jewish* Offerings are to be look'd upon by us *Christians* as only prefiguring that glorious Offering which our Lord, in the Fullness of Time, was to make of himself for the Sins of the whole World; or, at least, as typifying and representing that Purity and Willingness of Mind and Spirit by which it is expected we *Christians* should serve the Lord our God. All the Supports the Doctor brings for his Cause out of the Old Testament are taken from the ceremonial *Jewish* Law, which was abolish'd by the Introduction of *Christianity*; Not a Word from the Prophets; for they, as I shall shew by
and*

and by, sufficiently inveigh against and explode the Insufficiency and Imperfection of that which he calls a Duty.

He goes next to the new Testament: And let us see whether he has any better Success with his Proofs there. “ In the “ new Testament (says he) we are requir’d to be *rich towards God, to lay up our Treasures in Heaven, and to part not with a Share only, but with all we have, for God’s sake.* p. 11. But how does this prove that we are commanded to offer our Substance to God in his particular Sense? Does being *rich towards God*, imply any thing more than that we should *abound* in good and virtuous Actions in general, which St. Paul calls *the Work of the Lord*? And which may be done, tho’ a Man were never in his whole Life to dedicate one Penny to any other *pious* Uses, than relieving the Poor. Does *laying up Treasure in Heaven* mean any more, than laying in a Stock of Righteousness, in order to qualify ourselves for *the Gift of God, Eternal Life*? If not, to what Purpose does the Doctor produce these Authorities, but to impose upon his Audience? The young Man in the Gospel is exhorted to sell all he had and *give to the Poor*; and is told by our Lord that *then* he should *have Treasure in Heaven*. As for what he

makes St. Paul say, alluding to the Free-will Offerings under the Law, "Don't
 " *ye know that they who minister about*
 " *Holy Things live of the Sacrifice, and*
 " *they who wait at the Altar are Par-*
 " *takers of the Altar, even so hath the*
 " *Lord also ordain'd that they who preach*
 " *the Gospel should live of the Gospel;*"
 I don't see how it relates to either of his Purposes, that of offering our Substance to God, or relieving the Poor: Since it only means that *the Labourer is worthy of his Hire*, as well under the Gospel as under the Law; and ought to be paid out of the Fruits of his Work. A Doctrine proper enough to be inculcated to the Inhabitants of small Vicarages, where the Minister's chief Dependence is upon the voluntary Contributions of his Parishioners.

The Doctor having *shewn* (as he thinks) the Incumbency of the Duty of *offering our Substance to God*, both from the *Law of Nature*, and *the exprefs Commands of God in Scripture*, proceeds further to *confirm it from the Example of all good Men, in all Ages*. He begins (Pag. 12.) with asking, "What was it that made *Abel* accepted of God before *Cain* his Brother, but the Goodness of his Offering?" and says, that *Cain* being "remiss in Religion, was negligent and
 " nig-

“ niggardly in his Offering. But that *A-*
 “ *bel*, on the other hand, firmly believ-
 “ ing in the Providence of God, and
 “ thinking nothing too costly for his Ser-
 “ vice, offered to him the best and fattest
 “ of the Flock, and by *that means* became
 “ the Favourite of Heaven.” The Do-
 ctor’s Question is easily answer’d; It was
 the Faith and Righteousness of *Abel* that
 made his Offering the more excellent of the
 two, and him accepted of God before *Cain*
 his Brother. Our Lord himself styles
 him *righteous Abel*. And now, in re-
 turn, I desire the Doctor to answer these
 Questions following: In what Part of the
 Old or New Testament does he find,
First, That it was *the Goodness of the*
Offering which made *Abel* accepted of
 God before *Cain* his Brother? *Secondly*,
 That *Cain* being remiss in Religion, was
negligent and niggardly in his Offering?
Thirdly, That *Abel*, *thinking nothing too*
costly for God’s Service, offered to him
the best and fattest of the Flock? And
Fourthly and lastly, That by *that means*
 he became *the Favourite of Heaven?* In
 the Fourth Chapter of *Genesis*, where
 this Story is told, no more appears than
 that *Cain* being a *Tiller of the Ground*,
brought of the Fruit thereof an Offering
to the Lord. And that *Abel*, who was a
Keeper of Sheep, brought of the *Firslings*

of his Flock, and of the Fat thereof; and that he and his Offering were accepted by God. It does not appear that Cain's Offering was, as to the intrinsic Value, at all inferior to *Abel's*; it might be more costly for ought we know. Nor does it appear that *Abel* offered the *best and fattest* of the Flock; he offer'd only of the *Firstlings of his Flock, and of the Fat thereof*; in what Quantity, it is not said. Nor, if it had been the *best and fattest* of the Flock, does it follow that he should, by that means become the *Favourite of Heaven*. For, were that the Case, happy would it be for the *Rich*! Happy for those who have wherewithal to procure and make the fattest Offerings! How easily might they, by the Advantage of their Riches, enter into the Kingdom of Heaven!

The Doctor's Second Example is that of "*Abraham* being ready to offer up " his only Son at God's Command." But what is that to the Purpose in Hand? *Abraham* receiv'd a special Command to do a special Thing, as a Tryal of his Faith; which God perceiving to be firm and inviolable, stop'd him in the very Offer. Which, if it proves any thing, shews that God, when convinced of our Faith and sincere Obedience, expects no *vain and costly Oblations* at our Hands. " What was it (says the Doctor) that
" made

“ made *Abraham* the *Friend* of God, and
 “ the *Father* of the *Faithful*, but his
 “ Readiness to offer up his only Son at
 “ God’s Command?” I will tell him what
 it was; it was his continued Life of
 Righteousness and Obedience; of which
 the Case he produces is only one Instance
 and Fragment. Surely the Doctor would
 not infer from this, that if a Man sacri-
 fices to God what is most dear to him, he
 will make *God his Friend* by such an Ex-
 ploit: And, if not, wherein can it serve
 for an Example in the present Case?

His next Example is *Jacob*, Pag. 12.
 “ *Jacob*, when he fled from *Esau* his Bro-
 “ ther, vow’d to build a House for God,
 “ and to dedicate to his Service the Tenth
 “ of all that God should bless him with.”
 This Account is taken from *Gen. xxviii*,
 where it does not appear that *Jacob* vow’d
 to build a House for God; all that he vows
 is that the Lord shall be his God; ad-
 ding, in the next Verse, *And this Stone,*
which I have set for a Pillar, shall be
God’s House: And of all that thou shalt
give me, I will surely give the Tenth un-
to Thee. How *Jacob* intended to do this
 we are not told: therefore, in Charity,
 I conclude he design’d to relieve the
 Widow and the Fatherless with it; and
 not to dedicate it to God’s Service in the
 Doctor’s other Sense.

Ano^r

Another of his Examples is *David*, Pag. 13, whom he presumes to have attain'd the Character of "being a Man after God's own Heart, from his Readiness to make the most costly Offerings for the Promotion of God's Glory, and the Advancement of his Worship and Service." All which being only a Surmise and a Presumption, I cannot help expressing my Concern to find such a Doctrine preach'd upon so publick an Occasion, as encourages People to fancy that *God's Glory is to be promoted, and his Worship and Service advanced, by the most costly Offerings.* Whereas in the Gospel we find that, *to love the Lord our God with all our Heart, &c. and our Neighbour as our selves, is better than all whole Burnt-Offerings and Sacrifices.* Yet so partial is the Doctor to *David* for affording him some Countenance in this his weak Cause, that he expatiates mightily in his Commendation, and makes him as innocent and spotless as a Lamb. "Nor did *David's* Piety and Goodness ever cool," (says the Doctor, Pag. 15.) forgetting that his Piety and Goodness must both have cool'd, while he was so hot with Lust as to take another Man's Wife, and contrive to get her Husband murder'd, that he might enjoy her, as long as he liv'd, all to himself.

The

The Doctor appeals next to “ *Samuel* and the Prophets, who, he tells us, dedicated not only their Time and Substance, but even themselves to God.” They did so indeed; but in no other Sense than all good Men should do, by being resolutely bent to do the Will of God upon all Occasions, and especially in that Way to which they are particularly call’d and appointed. But that it was not their Opinion that God ought to be serv’d with our Substance, by dedicating costly Offerings to him in the Doctor’s distinct Sense, I shall shew more fully by and by.

In the mean time I pass to his Examples of “ *Cyrus, Artaxerxes, Darius* and “ *Ptolomy*, heathen Princes, whom the “ Light of Nature could instruct, as we “ read in the Book of *Ezra* (says the “ Doctor, *Pag. 15.*) that mighty Contributions toward the *pious* Work of “ rebuilding (building he should have said) “ the Second Temple, was the most effectual Method to avert the Wrath, and “ procure the Favour of the God of “ Heaven to them and their Posterity.” But the Doctor is very unhappy in his Quotations; the Book of *Ezra*, to which he appeals, informs us quite otherwise; if there is any Difference betwixt the Light of Nature and an extraordinary divine Impulse. In *Ezra* (Chap. i.) it is thus
D writ-

written, *Now in the first Year of Cyrus King of Persia (that the Word of the Lord by the Mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfill'd) the Lord stirred up the Spirit of Cyrus King of Persia, that he made a Proclamation throughout all his Kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus King of Persia, The Lord God of Heaven hath given me all the Kingdoms of the Earth, and he hath charged me to build him an House at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Now whether the Lord's stirring up the Spirit of Cyrus, and charging him to build the Second Temple, can be construed being instructed by the Light of Nature to do so, I leave to all reasonable People to judge. As for that Artaxerxes who succeeded Cyrus, he order'd the Building to be stop'd: And it ceas'd accordingly 'till the Second Year of Darius King of Persia; who directed that it should proceed again. But from no other Motive, appearing in the Book of Ezra, than his being convinc'd, by the ancient Records of the Kingdom, that Cyrus had formerly made a Decree to that Effect, Chap. vi. 1. Indeed, after he was prevail'd on, by the Sight of this Decree, to order that the Work should go on, he moreover makes a Decree that the Jews should be supplied with whatever they had need of for*
Sacri-

Sacrifices, that they might offer Sacrifices of sweet Savours unto the God of Heaven, and pray for the Life of the King and of his Sons. A general Order given to the Priests of all the Temples throughout his Dominions. Another *Artaxerxes*, after *Darius*, made another Decree very favourable to the *Jews* upon this Occasion; not *meerly* from the Light of Nature, but purely from a Divine Impulse; for *Ezra* (vi. 27.) *blesse*s the Lord God of his Fathers, for putting such a thing as this in the King's Heart. And certainly it could never have enter'd into any of their Hearts, by the Light of Nature, or common Reason, to have shewn so much Indulgence to so seditious and rebellious a People. But if the Doctor is resolv'd (contrary to the express Words of *Ezra*) to exclude Divine Impulse in this Case, I would suggest to him that these Privileges might probably be procur'd to the *Jews* by the great Interest of *Daniel* under *Cyrus*, and of *Ezra* under the *Artaxerxes* last mention'd. But as for *Ptolomy*, that other Heathen Prince, whether he was instructed by the Light of Nature, or by what means, to be favourable to them, *Ezra* saith not; nor is the Name of *Ptolomy* to be found in his Book; as indeed how should it come there: For tho' the other three liv'd before, or were

contemporary with *Ezra*, *Ptolomy* did not flourish 'till two hundred Years after him. And notwithstanding the Bustle made about this Temple, as an Instance in favour of the Doctor's Scheme, it plainly appears from the whole Tenor of the Book of *Ezra*, that it was erected by the voluntary Contributions of the collective Body of the *Jews*; as such Buildings for the Use of the Publick ought to be made; as our Churches are, at this Day, and I hope always will be maintain'd and provided for, by Acts of Parliament.

The Doctor carries us next to the New Testament, and shews us " the " Wise Men of the East (*Pag. 16.*) making costly Oblations to the new-born " King of the *Jews*." And then talks of " *Mary's Piety, highly approv'd by our* " *Lord*, for pouring the costly Ointment " on his Body." Neither of which seem to me to be Acts of Devotion immediately intended to God himself, but only of common Address, Civility and Compassion; especially the last, tho' the Doctor thinks it so pat to his Purpose. To be anointed with Oyl is, to this Day, accounted a great Refreshment in those Eastern Countries; and was anciently us'd more especially at Banquets and Entertainments. Therefore it is no wonder, if our Lord, who appear'd in the Form of a Servant,
and

and was often faint and weary with Travel, should find such Treatment from compassionate People; especially from those who had seen the mighty Works he did, and look'd upon him as that *Prophet* who was to come. And all this, without their intending, what they did to him, for an Offering of their Substance immediately made to God.

Next, the Doctor instances in “ the young Man, who had kept all the Commandments of God from his Youth, *loſing Heaven* because he could not bring himself to ſell all he had for Chriſt's Sake and the Poor.” Which is a mere Quibble; for what he was advis'd to ſell was not to be offer'd to God or to Chriſt in any other Senſe than by being given to the Poor. Nor is it certain that this young Man abſolutely *loſt Heaven* by not complying with our Lord's Exhortation; what he appears to have *loſt* was only the Opportunity of entering, at that time, into the regenerate State of the Goſpel, figuratively call'd *the Kingdom of Heaven*.

Then he mentions “ the new Converts to Chriſtianity laying their whole Subſtance at the Apoſtle's Feet, for the Uſe of the Church and Poor.” Which implies no more than that it was agreed by the Chriſtians in thoſe Days to throw all they had into a common Stock, for their

their mutual joynt Maintenance and Support; then, a very reasonable Resolution; but now nothing near so expedient or practicable.

And lastly he says, “ *Ananias and Sapphira* were punish’d with immediate Death for detaining a Part of what they had devoted to God’s Service:” where he varnishes the Scripture again, to give it a Complexion suitable to his own peculiar Fancy. What he calls *devoting to God’s Service* here, is nothing more than consenting to put what they had into the Stock of the Company. *The Multitude of them that believed were of one Heart and of one Soul: neither said any of them, that ought of the things which he possess’d was his own, but they had all things common. Neither was there any among them that lacked; for, as many as were Possessors of Lands or Houses, sold them, and brought the Prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the Apostles Feet: and Distribution was made unto every Man according as he had need,* Acts iv. 32. This is the whole State of that Case, in the Words of the Sacred Penman; and upon this Foot did *Ananias and Sapphira* pretend to act. Which was no more *devoting* what they had to *God’s Service*, than it would be for any one now to sell his real Estate, and put it in-
to

to the *Bank* or *South-Sea*. The flagrant Crime for which those two unhappy Persons were so signally punish'd, was that of *Lying*, in the most daring and insolent manner. Having sold their Possession, they pretended they brought the whole Price to put into the Stock; whereas, in truth, they kept back part of it. And by so doing were guilty of *Lying*, in the most notorious Instance, and with the highest Aggravation. For since the Apostles, who were the Directors of this joynt Stock, were so illuminated with the Holy Ghost as to be, as it were, infallible, for two of their own Church, who knew this, to offer to deceive them by such an impudent Lye, was a most unparallel'd Sin, was *agreeing together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord, was lying to God, and not to Men*, and therefore richly deserving the most exemplary Vengeance. As for the *Devotion* and *Consecration to God's Service*, which Dr. *Hammond*, and our Doctor after him, suppose in this Case, if they mean it in any Sense other than that of a Joynt Stock for their mutual Support, they must bring some other Authority to vouch for it than this Story. And, in the mean time, I hope those who are possess'd of Abby-Lands, and such as were formerly bequeath'd to superstitious Uses, will not suffer themselves to be frighted out of them,

them, by such Hob-Goblin Interpretations of Scripture.

Hitherto the Doctor has labour'd in vain, to produce proper Vouchers and Instances of that *Piety*, distinct from Charity to the Poor, which he is so fond of, and which he calls *Offering our Substance to God*. But now, by his triumphant manner of expressing himself (*Pag. 16.*) one would think he had succeeded to Admiration; for he winds up his Bottom thus :
 “ But the Example, which of all others
 “ shines with the brightest Lustre, and
 “ which is most capable of raising our
 “ Wonder, and exciting our Imitation, is
 “ that of our blessed Lord himself, who
 “ came into the World *to fulfill all Righteousness*, and to teach us by his Precepts and Example, as well as to redeem us by his Death; *he went about doing Good*: his Life was spent in the highest Acts of Charity to Mankind, and in the most exalted Elevations of *Piety* to his Father. His Life consum'd itself in Zeal for God's House, and expir'd in a Sacrifice to his Glory, and for the Salvation of the Souls of Men.”
 And who does not, with half an Eye, see how much in the dark, and how puzzled the Doctor is in this last Example, which, he says, *of all others, shines with the brightest Lustre*? We know our blessed Lord

Lord came to *fulfill all Righteousness*, that he *went about doing Good*, and that his Life was spent in the highest Acts of Charity to Mankind; but when did he *consecrate, devote or offer* any thing like *costly Oblations* to what the Doctor understands by *God's immediate Service*, and calls by the Name of *Piety*? As he was indued with an Almighty Power, so he exerted it in working Miracles to procure wherewithal to do Justice and Acts of Charity to the Poor. He wrought one, to do Honour to his Friend's Marriage; another, to feed several thousands of poor People; a third, to pay his Tribute-mony; and a fourth, to fill the Nets, and thereby the Purses of some of his Disciples: And surely, had he *approv'd and commended* the poor Widow for casting in *all her Living* into the Treasury (as the Doctor without any Authority affirms he did) we should have had some Instance of his own *going and doing likewise*; tho' at the Expence of a Miracle. His saying our Lord's " Life
 " was spent in the most exalted Elevations
 " of *Piety* to his Father, that it consum'd
 " itself in *Zeal for God's House*, and ex-
 " pir'd in a *Sacrifice to his Glory*," is raising a Dust about nothing. How exalted soever his *Piety* was, it never shew'd itself in *dedicating or consecrating* such *Oblations* as the Doctor contends for.

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And, at that *one single Time in his Life*, when he was fulfilling that Prophecy concerning himself, which says, *the Zeal of thine House hath even eaten me up*, instead of making *costly Oblations*, his Zeal consisted in shewing his utter Dislike of all such carnal Trumpery, and in driving away all those that sold Sacrifices for the Use of the Temple. He says, they made *God's House*, which should be only *a House of Prayer, a Den of Thieves*. As the Case is, at this very time, in Popish Countries, where rich Oblations are so much preach'd up and practis'd. The Tables of the Money-Changers were probably Tables where the People paid the Priests for their Sacrifices. Yet from this one Act of our Lord's shewing his Detestation of all such gross Impurities, the Doctor says *his Life consum'd itself in Zeal for God's House*. If, by *God's House*, he meant only in general, *the Good of God's People*, I should joyn Issue with him; but then his *bright Example* would prove nothing to his Purpose. But if, by *God's House*, he means the Temple, and the carnal Worship thereof, so far was he from *consuming his Life in Zeal for it*, that he often express'd himself against it, and declar'd that the Time was come when it was to cease, and God was to be *worship'd every where*; not with *costly*,

costly Oblations, but in Spirit and in Truth.

The Doctor concludes this his first Head, with observing that " God is the " Author of our Being, and the Fountain " from whence all our Blessings flow ;" inferring thus, " And if so, then the most " splendid Oblations we can make him of " our Substance are infinitely short of " what we owe him, only mean Compo- " sitions for the vast Sums we have re- " ceiv'd from his Bounty," &c. *Pag. 17.* Which Consideration, in any reasonable Thinker, would produce this Inference rather; That God, having no Occasion for our Substance, cannot be honour'd better than by our relieving the Poor with it, and endeavouring to lead our Lives in *all Godliness and Honesty.* For offering our *whole Substance* to God is so far from being *only a mean Composition* for what we owe him, that it would be no Composition at all; nor does any thing like it appear to be expected from us in the revealed Will of God.

So far from it, that it is manifest God detested those who placed their Religion therein, and laid any Strefs upon such a Sort of *Piety.* To confirm which, hear what the Prophet *Micah* says, *Chap. vi. 6.* *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow my self before the high God?*

Shall I come before him with Burnt-Offerings, with Calves of a Year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of Rams, and with ten thousands of Rivers of Oyl? Shall I give my Firstborn for my Transgression, the Fruit of my Body for the Sin of my Soul? No; God expects none of these costly Oblations; but, as the Prophet declares, God has, not only by the Light of Nature, but by his revealed Will, signified what is proper for us to do in order to please him, what is our good and reasonable Service. He hath shewed thee, O Man, what is Good: And what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do justly, and to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? Which is agreeable to what Samuel told Saul; Hath the Lord as great Delight in Burnt-Offerings and Sacrifices (that is in costly Oblations of any kind) as in obeying the Voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than Sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of Rams. 1 Sam. 15. 22. The Prophet Isaiah, who may serve as a Representative for the rest of the Prophets, is in the same strain: To what purpose is the multitude of your Sacrifices unto me, saith the Lord? I delight not in the Blood of Bullocks, or of Lambs, or of He-Goats. Bring no more vain Oblations; Incense is an Abomination unto me. But this the
 Lord

Lord bids them do instead of the other ;
*wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil
 of your doings from before mine Eyes,
 cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek
 Judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge
 the fatherless, plead for the widow.*

Isaiah 1. 11. Which three Precepts last
 mention'd would be a proper Text for
 one that preaches upon such an occasion
 as the Anniversary of the Sons of the
 Clergy : And had the Doctor stuck to
 those Points only, he would have sav'd
 me the Trouble of these Remarks, and
 had my sincere Thanks.

Let us now examine the second Head
 of the Doctor's Discourse, *p.* 18. where
 he undertakes to shew, " that Acts of
 " *Piety* and *Charity* do not interfere ;
 " but that they who, from a right Princi-
 " ple, perform the one, must encourage
 " and promote the other." But as he
 can never (consistently with the Gospel)
 make it appear, that we can, with our
 Substance, do any Acts of *Piety* superiour
 to those of *relieving* the Poor, I shall
 only desire the Reader, with me, to ob-
 serve and admire how carefully this Di-
 vine distinguishes betwixt *Piety* and
Charity ; by *Piety*, all along, meaning an
Offering our Substance to God in I know
 not what sense ; by *Charity*, *relieving the
 Poor* : how much of his Sermon he has
 laid

laid out in inforcing the One, and how little he has insisted on the other. He says, "Works of *Piety* have a more immediate relation to God's Honour and Service, than Acts of *Compassion and Tenderneſs* to all Men, even thoſe who are of the Houſhold of Faith. And that Acts of *Charity* to the Poor, in their own nature, carry but a kind of ſecondary Goodneſs in them, when compar'd with ſuch Acts of *Piety* as that of *Mary's* in the Text, which are convey'd directly, and as it were, into the very Hand of God himſelf." p. 18, 19, 20. Would not one think, by all this, the Doctor deſign'd to pervert the Purpoſe of the Anniverſary, and was endeavouring to convince his Audience that they could beſtow their Subſtance better ſome other way, than by giving it to relieve poor Widows and Orphans? But this Imputation he evades, by pretending to ſhew under his third Head,

"That the Work he is recommending, that of relieving the Widows and Orphans of the Clergy, is ſuch a Work as is both *pious* and *charitable*." p. 21. But before I go any further, I muſt obſerve that the Doctor all along confines the uſe of the Words *Pious* and *Piety* to denote the peculiar Duty of offering our Subſtance to God, in a diſtinct Senſe from

from that of *relieving the Poor*: which is appropriating it to a new Sense from what it signifies either generally or particularly. The Word *Piety*, in general, supposes that Veneration with which we ought to behave our selves to God; or what is implied in the *Greek* Word *εὐσεβεία*; and, in particular, the Duty due from a Son to a Father: But where does it signify, *offering our Substance to God*? And is it not surprizing to find a Preacher pressing the Performance of *something* which he endeavours to shew to be a very important Duty, couch'd in a Word, not once to be found in the old Testament, nor twice in the new. The Word *Piety*, so frequently inculcated by the Doctor in his Discourse, and even prefer'd to *Charity* (which the Scripture so often recommends and places at the Head of all other Virtues) is to be found only in *1 Tim. 5. 4.* where it means, *living respectfully*, to Parents or other Superiours. This is worthy the Reader's notice.

And how does the Doctor make out that relieving the Widows and Orphans of the Clergy, is both a *pious* and *charitable* work, in his Sense of the Word *pious*? Why, after spending a great many Words to shew how *peculiarly afflicting* the Case of the Widows and Orphans of the Clergy is (which, bad as it is, has
however

however nothing more *peculiarly afflicting* in it than the Case of those numerous Families of almost all Professions and Callings, who yearly spend their whole Income, and have as just a Pretence to do it as the Clergy) he says, " the Widows and Fatherless are God's peculiar Care, and to relieve them is not only an Alms but an Oblation also; an Offering as well as a Charity, and an Act of *Piety* to God as well as Compassion to the Poor." *p. 24.* And thus the Doctor explains away his solemn Distinction. When you attempt to grasp him, he vanishes and leaves nothing but Disappointment in your Hands; except this extorted Confession, that *he that giveth to the Poor lendeth to the Lord*; and that there is no other way of making Oblations to God, but by relieving the distressed.

What he means by saying, " he cannot see how the Clergy can possibly be supposed to leave any tolerable Subsistence for their surviving Families, unless they were more vers'd in the methods of Application and Address, than the Plainness and Simplicity of their Manners will give them leave to be: Unless they were less tenacious of those Principles in which they have been educated, which they humbly conceive
" their

“ their solemn Declarations and Subscriptions oblige them not to be &c.” p. 22. I say, what the Doctor means here, I am at a Loss to know; unless he intends the *Jacobitish* Nonjuring Clergy; who have indeed, many of them, depriv’d themselves of the Means of getting a Livelihood answerable to their Profession; but their Case should not be applied to the Clergy in general. For whatever Ecclesiastical Preferments are not obtain’d by some, must be fill’d by others of the same Calling: So that I cannot see how *want of Address, or Plainness and Simplicity of Manners*, or being *tenacious in Principles* of any Sort, can affect the whole Body of the Clergy, of whom the Doctor pretends to be speaking in this Place: These Disqualifications can only hurt a few particular Persons; and that, in favour of others of the same Function; by which, the whole collective Body does not suffer at all. So that unless the Doctor means here, that only those of the Clergy who are of a particular Stamp, are liable to these Inconveniencies, without so much as allowing the rest worthy to be reckon’d of the same Order, I profess I cannot comprehend what he means.

The Doctor having yet something more by which he endeavours to shew that this Benefaction is *pious* as well as *charitable*,

let us examin it. He says (*p. 25.*) “ Wor-
 “ thy Notions of God will prompt Men
 “ to open wide their Hands for the Re-
 “ lief of Widows and Orphans, *especially*
 “ those of the Clergy; whose Wants will
 “ demand a *more* than common Compas-
 “ sion from all religious and good Men,
 “ upon account of the *holy* and *honoura-*
 “ *ble* Station of their Fathers and Hus-
 “ bands, and the *near Relation* they bear
 “ to him who hath said, *he that despiseth*
 “ *you despiseth me;*” &c. Without doubt,
 the Man who stands the fairest and fore-
 most in God’s Account, has the most *holy*
 and *honourable Station*: Even a Heathen
 could say, *Nobilitas sola est atque unica*
Virtus. And when some, in the Gospel,
 were mention’d under the Title of our
 Lord’s *near Relations*, he declares who
 they are who have a true Claim to any Af-
 finity with him; *whosoever shall do the*
Will of my Father which is in Heaven,
the same is my Brother, and Sister, and
Mother, Matth. xii. 48. From whence it
 appears that the Clergy are not merely by
 their Profession intitled to *holy and ho-*
nourable Stations, and a *near Relation* to
 God, as the Doctor would insinuate.

He says (*p. 26.*) “ Without Vanity it may
 “ be spoken, the *Parts, Learning, and Pie-*
 “ *ty* of our Parochial Clergy are superior
 “ to those of the Clergy of the Reformed
 “ Churches

“Churches abroad.” However this may be spoken without *Vanity*, sure with *Charity* it cannot. *Charity*, which *envieth not*, which *vaunteth not itself*, which *is not puffed up*, which *doth not behave itself unseemly*, which *seeketh not her own*, and *thinketh no Evil*; that most excellent Virtue, *Christian Charity*, will never consent that the Ministers of the Church of Christ in *Great-Britain* shall say that their *Parts*, *Learning*, and *Piety* are superior to those of the Ministers of his Churches abroad. In truth, it is needless to say what mighty Obligations the Christian Commonwealth has continually lain under to the *Parts* and *Learning* of the latter, ever since the Reformation. And, as for their *Piety* (if thereby the Doctor means a due Respect for God) of that who can be Judge but God alone?

And now, if in the Course of this Examination it should appear that I have mistaken or misinterpreted the Doctor's Sense, or have us'd too harsh Expressions concerning him, I ask his Pardon for it; declaring that I have no Design against him inconsistent with that *Charity* I have been speaking of: nor will I pretend to censure his own intentional *Piety* and *Goodness* in the Case; they may be very sincere, for ought I know. It was only his Discourse, against which I found my
self

self oblig'd to draw my Pen; and which I heartily wish could have been publish'd without a Name, that there might not be the least room for Suspicion of my having enter'd into this Inquiry out of any Personal Dislike. His Discourse appears to me in such a Light as if it encourag'd People to make Oblations of their Substance to God in some other Sense than by relieving the Poor; and as if it made Oblations of that sort to be more acceptable and meritorious, than what are bestow'd merely for the Support of the Indigent. A Doctrine, without any Foundation; and which, if practis'd in proportion to the Importance which is given to it, would by degrees draw us insensibly into the Whirlpool of Superstition, and consequentially plunge us once more in the old Dregs of *Popery*.

F I N I S.